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BARRIERS TO THE EDUCATION OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS
AS SEEN BY THEIR PARENTS, THEIR TEACHERS AND BY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by



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A THESIS

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OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Barriers to the Education of Economically Disadvantaged Students as seen by their Parents, their Teachers and by School Principals" submitted by Elizabeth Anne Blowers in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of teachers, school principals and socially assisted parents of difficulties encountered by economically disadvantaged students. Informants were asked if each of fourteen problem areas constituted a barrier to the education of the disadvantaged child. The areas covered were:

1. parental interest in education;
2. student interest in education;
3. ability to procure suitable school clothing for students;
4. ability to pay school costs promptly and without hardship;
5. teaching methods used;
6. amenability of students to school type discipline;
7. suitability of school programs;
8. physical health of students;
9. parental information on aims and function of the school;
10. opportunity of students to cultivate their special interests and talents;
11. social acceptance of students by their peers;
12. absenteeism from school;
13. transiency causing loss of school time and frequent school transfers and
14. preschool experiences useful as a basis for elementary school learning.

The sample consisted of thirty parents receiving welfare, thirty school principals and thirty teachers. Principals were selected from

the schools attended by children of the parent group. Teachers were from the schools in census tracts 15 and 20, Edmonton's most disadvantaged area. All informants were individually interviewed. The interview schedule developed for this study was used.

The total number of each group stating that each area constitutes a problem in the education of disadvantaged pupils was found. These totals were compared by the chi square method of analysis to determine areas of disagreement among the groups.

Teachers and parents differed in their perceptions of the problem of parental interest in education. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level of probability. Parents differed to teachers and principals in their perceptions of the problem of procuring school clothing, paying school costs and lack of appropriate preschool experiences. These differences in perceptions of parents and school personnel were significant at the .001 level. Parents and teachers differed in perceptions of the suitability of present school programs for disadvantaged pupils. Teachers and principals also differed in their perceptions of program suitability. These differences were statistically significant at the .001 and .10 levels respectively. Teachers and principals differed with parents in their perceptions of the amount of information parents possessed as to the aims and purposes of the school. These differences were significant at the levels of .01 and .10 respectively.

The findings of this study indicate a need for better communication among teachers, principals and economically disadvantaged parents.

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The parent sample was located by social workers of the City of Edmonton Social Service Department. The social workers and the Director, Mr. Keith Wass, contributed both time and energy to this project.

Principals and teachers of the Separate and Public School Boards found time for interviews, often at recess, lunchtime and after regular school hours.

The pilot study was conducted with the co-operation of Dr. J. Chambers, Prof. J. C. Powell and Dr. D. Friesen.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. THE PROBLEM

As educators we frequently define our educational goals in terms of the education of each child to the upper limit allowed by his potential. The inclusion of nearly all children in the publicly financed school system is an important factor in our frequent failure in achieving this ideal. It is true that we may never achieve this, but past failure does not preclude future success.

It is our responsibility to locate those groups of students who are receiving less than maximum benefit from our school system and to attempt to isolate reasons for the lack of educational success of these young people. We need some knowledge as to why such students fail to benefit from the schooling provided before we can improve their educational status.

One large group of students who do not appear to achieve well in school is made up of the children of economically disadvantaged families. The difficulties of this group are investigated in the present study.

Need for the Study

A great deal has been written on the education of economically disadvantaged children. In most of this literature, the opinions given are those of authors who are not in daily contact with students from low income families. This study was designed to investigate the opinions of teachers and principals who are presently educating these children. A third group made up of low income parents was included. Differences in attitudes among the three groups were compared statistically.

More specifically, the study investigated the following questions:

What are the barriers to the education of economically disadvantaged children as perceived by their parents, teachers and principals?

Are the barriers perceived by the three groups similar in nature or are there areas of disagreement?

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Parent Group

The group made up of economically disadvantaged parents was difficult to establish, as poverty had first to be defined. Gurin and Epps (1966) differentiate between severe poverty and marginal poverty. The former includes families where family income is below \$2400 per year, and the latter, where the annual family income is under \$3600. Scott (1966) reports that one in six Alberta families lives below the poverty level of \$3000, while an additional 28,000 families in this province receive a marginal family income of three to four thousand dollars. The Economic Council of Canada (Poverty: A persistence that is a disgrace, 1968) redefines poverty as the level at which persons spend seventy percent or more of their incomes on the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing. Using this measure of poverty, about three in every ten Canadians are poor.

By any of these definitions, many Canadians are living in poverty. However, it is not possible to identify the poor by clothing, appearance or neighbourhood. The best method of identification appeared to be interviewing families receiving social assistance. There is no evidence of the existence of large numbers of poor persons who are unknown to

either the municipal or provincial welfare offices (Alberta. Executive Council, vol. 2, 1967). Therefore, as an operational definition for the purposes of this study, economically disadvantaged families are those who were, at the time of this study, receiving any financial assistance from the City of Edmonton Social Service Department.

Principal and Teacher Groups

Parents were asked for the names of schools their children attended. Thirty of these schools were randomly selected and the persons designated as principals by the Separate and Public School Boards were interviewed. It was felt that all principals would have some awareness of the problems encountered by economically disadvantaged students.

It was assumed that several teachers in any sample selected would be relatively recent university graduates. To ensure that all teachers interviewed had some experience with economically disadvantaged students, only teachers in schools located in census tracts 15 and 20 were included. These tracts were identified as the most disadvantaged areas of the city by the 1961 Canada Census (Alberta. Executive Council, vol. 2, 1967). A map showing the area covered by these tracts is included. (Figure 1)

III. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

Chapter two will briefly summarize literature considered relevant to this study. The instrument and samples used are described in the following chapter. Findings of the study are given in chapter four and a summary and conclusions make up the final chapter.



FIGURE 1: CENSUS TRACTS 15 AND 20, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, 1961 CANADA CENSUS

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON EDUCATION IN CANADA AND POVERTY

I. EDUCATION IN CANADA

Today, as throughout her history, Canada must rely upon the immigration of skilled and professional persons to maintain her economy. Porter (1965) estimates that in the period from 1951 to 1961 about one-third of the increment in the professions was filled by immigrants. He quotes (p. 43) the dean of a Canadian medical school as stating that thirty-five percent of all doctors registering to practise in Canada in 1962 were graduates of foreign medical schools. Over one half of the new skilled jobs in industry were filled by immigrants in the decade between 1950 and 1960 (Porter, 1965). It is clear from these figures that we are not training enough Canadians to fill our most desirable jobs.

To look at the same problem in another way, a substantial number of Canadians are undereducated. Over one million Canadians are functionally illiterate, with less than four years of schooling, while almost one half of all Canadians aged fifteen and over have only an elementary school education (Education and the war on poverty, 1966). One reason for this appears to be that education is costly at the high school and post high school levels. When the male wage earner receives more than \$7000 a year, one of every two children aged 19 to 24 and resident at home attends school. When the annual income of the male wage earner is under \$4000, only one of eight children in this age range attends school (Education and the war on poverty, 1966). Yet the actual number of highly intelligent children in

disadvantaged families is far greater than the number to be found in the relatively small proportion of homes of managerial and professional families (Davis, 1965).

Large numbers of immigrants are finding responsible and desirable employment in Canada while many Canadians do not have adequate education and skills to compete in the labour market. This waste of human potential resulting from a failure to educate students adequately seems unnecessary in a country as wealthy as Canada. Dependents of economically disadvantaged parents appear to make up one group who are not receiving adequate education. For this reason, this study deals with a survey of opinion as to why economically disadvantaged students often are unable to receive maximum benefit from our educational system.

II. POVERTY

Literature on poverty and the poor has reached mountainous proportions. This review will mention only those aspects of poverty which may influence the education of children of disadvantaged families or those for which the present study may provide additional local information.

Conditions Leading to Low Income Levels

Many attempts have been made to find conditions correlating with the presence of poverty. Some of these conditions are the advanced age of the chief wage earner (Schlesinger, 1966), a female headed family (Gurin & Epps, 1966), a single family head who has to tend children and so is unemployable (Woodsworth, 1965b), a partial or total disability in the chief wage earner (Schlesinger, 1966), membership in a rural farm family (Cornish, 1965), a low level of skills or education (Woodsworth, 1965b), personal

behaviour limiting earnings or the optimal use of income (Woodsworth, 1965b) and a history of part-time work by the family head (Cornish, 1965). In this study some parent informants mentioned advanced age, female headed families, disabled wage earners and seasonally employed family heads as causes for their financial situations.

Poverty as a Subculture

The subculture of the poor is frequently seen as a strong force in propagating the condition of poverty (Harrington, 1962). Schlesinger (1966) feels that it is more appropriate to see common characteristics found among the economically disadvantaged as temporary adjustments made to cope with a lack of money rather than as elements of an active subculture. Evidence of the social transmission of behaviour necessary to form a stable subculture appears lacking in the present sample. One factor working against such stability in Edmonton is the high rate of transiency in low income neighbourhoods. Many immigrants live in these areas only until they are financially able to move. According to school personnel, a large proportion of the Metis population tends to move out of the city in the spring. Other moves come from frequent change of jobs, condemning of housing and various conditions which become unbearable for either tenants or landlords. School staff members reported that only the Chinese population in Edmonton is stable enough to form a long term community in tracts 15 and 20.

Another factor that appears to work against the formation of a subculture is the lack of social contact frequently found among the poor. One outcome of this seems to be the frequent school absences of older children who are kept home to babysit. This tendency was noted by both

school personnel and parents in the present study. Several mothers stated that they realized they were forcing their children to miss school, but there was no one else to care for preschool children when they had to leave the home. Kugel and Parsons (1967) found very economically disadvantaged families to be extremely lonely and isolated from their communities. A Canadian study (Woodsworth, 1965a) found that poor persons tend not to know each other, with two-thirds of the sample belonging to no organized groups. Hollingshead (1949) noted that students from the lower economic level avoided joining organized extracurricular activities. Possible reasons for this are included in chapter five in the discussion of clothing, school fees and the development of extracurricular interests.

Roach and Gursslin (1966) point out that it is pleasant and easy to assume, especially when planning to alleviate differences, a cohesive subcultural group. Frequently the social interaction necessary in transmitting this culture is not observable.

Lack of Political Power among the Economically Deprived

Our information on the poor is confusing. Porter (1965) considers this to be in part the result of writers, teachers and social workers having middle class backgrounds so that "...there is almost no one producing a view of the world which reflects the experience of the poor or the underprivileged. It (is) as though they (do) not exist" (p. 6). Overlooking the wishes of the economically disadvantaged can have unpleasant consequences. Talbot (1968) believes that the riots in New Haven were caused by failure of authorities to involve ghetto residents in improvement programs. He observes that relief from above does not solve the problem of impotence, the inability to influence in any way

one's own fate.

Generally the poor know less about organizations of all kinds, from the federal to the local levels (Cornish, 1965). The organizations that do exist in slum areas have outside sponsors for indigenous organizations seldom develop there. As Woodsworth (1965b) points out, organization requires energy, confidence and money.

Harrington (1962) states that the poor are politically invisible and lack power to the extent of being unable to speak for themselves. If we are to become aware of their opinions, we must actively seek them out, not wait until they approach us. The present study was designed to take advantage of the experience and insights of the disadvantaged. It should be mentioned that the parents approached were both informative and articulate.

Schools and Staff in Low Income Neighbourhoods

In investigating schools and staff in low income areas of Edmonton, Holdaway and Seger (1967) found that such schools have significantly fewer classrooms and therefore presumably less equipment than other schools. Because of this smaller size, principals have more teaching duties and lower salaries than the average. Principals have less experience as administrators and both they and their teachers tend to have less university training than their colleagues in more advantaged areas. It should be noted that this study was carried out in only one of Edmonton's two school systems. The inclusion of the second system might have affected the results of this study.

In the present study, questions were asked on the suitability of

school programs and teaching methods with disadvantaged children.

Attitudes of Disadvantaged Parents toward Education

There is a good deal of evidence that the poor are interested in their children's education. As early as the end of World War II a national survey in the United States showed that two-thirds of the parents classified as poor wanted their children to attend college (Hyman, 1953), while a follow-up study of these children (Mulligan, 1951) showed that almost one half of them wanted this level of education for themselves. The Calgary Study (Alberta, Executive Council, vol. 3, 1967) found that over three-fifths of the parents with annual incomes of \$4000 or less wanted university training for their children. Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) found disadvantaged parents more concerned about the progress of their children in elementary school than were middle class parents.

Reissman (1962) believes that lower class parents and children, unlike those of the middle class, are interested in education from a practical rather than an intellectual viewpoint. The disadvantaged feel that learning is to enable one to do something, rather than a legitimate end in itself. In contrast, Mackler and Giddings (1964) believe that this practical definition of education is a general feeling in the present North American culture and is not an attitude limited to the disadvantaged. This attitude does not appear to be universal, even among the economically deprived. Metis parents in the depressed Lac la Biche area of northern Alberta were asked if they considered a high school education or trade training more important for their sons. Over three-quarters of the sample considered the general high school education more important (Alberta, Executive Council, vol. 4, 1967).

While education may be desired, economically disadvantaged parents may not see high school and post high school attendance as a realistic possibility for their children (Kvaraceus, Gibson & Curtin, 1967). Woodsworth (1965b) says that while nearly all families want the best education for their children, the poor often do not know what the best is and are unable to provide guidance in the everyday decisions that a student must make. The only factor that Kahl (1953) found differentiating university and non-university boys of high intelligence was that the parents whose sons attended university had been able to teach their children how to use the educational structure to attain middle class status.

Often parents cannot financially support their children until they finish school. Another factor which may operate to prevent lower class children from aspiring to middle class status is a fear of the loss of family and peer group ties before new ones are available to replace them. Both parents and students may fear the distance separating them if the students achieve a higher socio-economic level (Riessman, 1962).

The influence of parental approval on the success of school programs is often underestimated. Brookover (1967) concluded that only parents were able to change significantly the child's self-concept as a learner and, subsequently, his achievement level. Another study (Gurin & Epps, 1966) found the mother to be extremely influential in persuading the student to continue schooling. Negatively, a lack of parental interest in education was considered a decisive factor in dropping out of school by about one of three Alberta students who decided to leave school before graduation (Larson, 1958).

The present study posed a question of parental interest in

children's schooling and a question on students' interest in their own education.

Illnesses and Transiency

The school attendance of economically disadvantaged pupils tends to be low because of frequent illnesses and transiency (Sexton, 1961). The health of the poor, as well as their life expectancy, is below the national average and there appear to be more chronic health problems in disadvantaged homes (Alberta. Executive Council, vol. 3, 1967).

Woodsworth (1965-b) considers the high mobility of the poor to be an attempt to find a reasonable balance between what can be afforded and what is tolerable. Evidence on the effect of this mobility on school performance is conflicting. Justman (1967) found low academic achievement among the mobile, rather than the stable, disadvantaged. Another study (Brockman & Reeves, 1967) found that transiency tends to depress achievement for girls but not for boys, with transfers during the summer months making significantly less difference. Wichstrom (1967) found a tendency approaching statistical significance for children having three or more transfers to repeat grades or to receive conditional promotions, while Kitchen (1967) found that only two percent of children having interprovincial transfers into Alberta either lost a school year or were downgraded.

In this study questions were asked about the health and transiency of economically disadvantaged Edmonton children.

The Myth of the Jungle School

Levin (1965) summarizes popular attitudes in his discussion on the "myth of the jungle school". He considers this myth an invention to serve teachers who are unable to help pupils achieve work for which the

children are unfit. Although unsuited to school expectations, these children desperately want to succeed and each September sees them hoping that "things will be better this year". Such children have unsuitable rather than negative motivation. To maintain the myth, teachers tend to ignore the good behaviour of the vast majority of the students in slum schools. The question on discipline in this study attempted to investigate the myth of the jungle school.

The literature on poverty and the poor is confusing. Are we dealing with a subculture whose values contrast with our own or are we dealing with individuals like ourselves who are coping as best they can with the many problems caused by a lack of money? The subcultural viewpoint is well expressed by Harrington (1966, p. 22), "Poverty-stricken people form a culture. . . . to be poor is to think and feel differently." On the other hand, as early as 1905, one of our best known twentieth century savants advised that it was a mistake to " . . . waste your time on Social Questions. What is the matter with the poor is Poverty." (Shaw, 1967, p. 226).

There is a danger inherent in assuming that problems such as poverty are overwhelmingly complex, the danger of procrastination until all the evidence is available, thereby avoiding any action. There is even more danger in assuming that large groups of students are in some way different in their needs and abilities. The self-fulfilling prophecy of failure (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) has long operated to the detriment of "subcultures" such as that of the poor as well as groups with non-Caucasian backgrounds. It is pleasant and easy to assume that the economically disadvantaged are different to the rest of us. If we accept

the responsibility of educating all children, this appears to be both inappropriate and dangerous thinking.

CHAPTER III

THE INSTRUMENT AND THE SAMPLE

I. THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument, "Barriers to the Education of Economically Disadvantaged Students, Forms A and B", was developed for use in this study. It is an interview schedule and was designed to investigate opinions as to problems encountered by the children of the poor in attending school.

Development of the Instrument

The literature on the problems of educating the economically disadvantaged was examined. Then a pilot study was conducted, involving sixty experienced teachers, experienced administrators and parents receiving social assistance. These sixty persons were asked what they believed to be the difficulties encountered by economically disadvantaged students and how these difficulties might be overcome. The form used in the pilot study is included in Appendix A. It was used orally with parents.

The difficulties most frequently mentioned by the pilot study informants and by the literature formed the fourteen questions making up this interview. The problem areas examined were parental and student interest in education, effectiveness of teaching methods and school programs, discipline, difficulty for parents in procuring school clothing and paying school costs for their children, health, transiency, parental information on school affairs, extracurricular development of interests, acceptance of low income students by their classmates, absenteeism and the school readiness of grade one children.

No claim is made that the fourteen problem areas are mutually exclusive. At this early stage of investigation, such distinct classification is neither possible nor particularly desirable. The survey of the literature revealed no similar instrument.

It became clear in the course of the pilot study that separate forms were necessary in interviewing parents and school personnel. A good deal of rephrasing was required to obtain the same information from the different groups. Form A of the schedule was designed for use with school personnel and Form B was used with parent informants. While the two forms sometimes appear to ask different questions, the pilot study indicated that the meanings conveyed to each group by the different question forms were similar.

Purpose of the Instrument

The purpose of the interview schedule was to collect a wide range of information. Its effectiveness depended in part upon the skill of the interviewer in persuading respondents to clarify their answers. When this was done, it was possible to statistically examine how the three groups, parents, teachers and principals, differed in their perceptions of school problems of economically disadvantaged students. Methods considered appropriate by each group for partially alleviating each problem are included in the Resumé of Findings in Appendix C.

The instrument, with more explicit instructions for its use, is included in Appendix B.

II. THE SAMPLE

The sample consisted of ninety informants, thirty parents receiving

social assistance from the City of Edmonton, thirty teachers and thirty school principals.

Parent Sample

Lists of persons having one or more children attending school and receiving some amount of social assistance were compiled by social workers of the Edmonton City Social Service Department. Parents in thirty families were interviewed after they agreed to take part in the survey.

Either parent available was interviewed. In most cases, this was the mother. Both parents were interviewed in three families and the father only in one family. Of the families interviewed, the children of twelve attended school in the Separate (Roman Catholic) System and the remaining eighteen sent their children to the Public System. This ratio of 12 : 18 was maintained in interviewing teachers and principals in the two school systems.

Some information on the amount of social assistance received by Edmontonians was included in the Boyle Street Survey (Alberta. Executive Council, vol. 2, 1967). One half of those assisted received under \$100 per month while only eight percent received over \$250 monthly. It would appear that living on welfare is extremely difficult (Living on welfare is hell, 1969). Schlesinger (1966) says that such low payments reflect a general view that anyone living on welfare should have few material comforts. He estimates that such grants are barely half what is required for a minimal standard of living. Therefore it seems appropriate to consider welfare recipients as being among our most economically deprived group.

Teacher Sample

It was assumed that some teachers in any sample would be relatively

new to school conditions. To ensure that all teachers interviewed had some experience with economically deprived students, lists were compiled of teachers in the schools in Census Tracts 15 and 20. This area has been identified as the most disadvantaged section of Edmonton (Alberta. Executive Council, vol. 2, 1967). Teachers from the two separate schools and three public schools in this area were randomly selected maintaining the ratio of twelve separate school to eighteen public school informants.

Principal Sample

Parent informants listed schools attended by their children. From these, eighteen public schools and twelve separate schools were randomly selected and their principals interviewed.

A total of ninety individual interviews were conducted by the same interviewer among principals, teachers and economically disadvantaged parents.

Assumptions

An underlying assumption in this study is that education, work and reasonable earnings are desirable goals for economically disadvantaged students. Other assumptions concern the sample. It is assumed that the parents interviewed were genuinely economically disadvantaged. Responses given by informants are considered to be valid and reliable, and to express the past experiences of respondents.

Several assumptions are made about the instrument. Field investigation is considered more appropriate than mailed questionnaires in this design. The instrument is considered valid, interviewer bias is assumed to be minimal and Forms A and B of the instrument are considered to ask similar questions.

Limitations of the Study

Parent informants were selected by social workers and only parents willing to co-operate were interviewed. The parents contacted were generally mothers.

The parent sample cannot be considered generally representative of the poor. All families received social assistance at the time of the study. The problems faced by students whose families are assisted may not be the same as those of unassisted disadvantaged children. A recent Canadian study (School performance of children, 1966) compared children of families who received welfare with their best friends whose parents received no assistance. The children whose parents received welfare displayed lower aspirations and tended to leave school earlier than the other children.

The parents in this study are not necessarily representative of assisted families. The City Social Service Department accepts short-term clients for a three month period. Persons needing longer assistance are the responsibility of the Provincial Department of Welfare. Because of this, the families of seasonal labourers are probably over-represented in this sample. These parents might best be classified as working class and findings interpreted with this in mind.

Generalizations from the findings of this study are limited by the informants being volunteer and predominantly female. The parents interviewed received only short-term social assistance.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

I. DATA ANALYSIS

Purpose of Data Analysis

This study investigated differences in perceptions of teachers, principals and parents of problems encountered by economically disadvantaged students. An assumption was made that areas showing very significant differences indicate a lack of communication among the groups which probably leads to misunderstandings when parents, teachers and principals meet.

Problem Areas Examined

Informants were asked if each of fourteen problem areas adversely affected the disadvantaged student's educational opportunity. The areas examined were:

1. parental interest in education;
2. student interest in education;
3. ability to procure suitable school clothing for students;
4. ability to pay school costs promptly and without hardship;
5. teaching methods used;
6. amenability of students to school-type discipline;
7. suitability of school programs;
8. physical health of students;
9. parental information on aims and function of the school;
10. opportunity of students to cultivate special interests and talents;

11. social acceptance of students by their peers;
12. absenteeism from school;
13. transiency causing loss of school time and school transfers and
14. preschool experiences useful as a basis for elementary school learning.

In the final examination of the data, it was apparent that the areas dealing with physical health, absenteeism and transiency were less appropriate than others for use in a study on attitudes such as the present one. Parent informants had great difficulty in responding to these questions. Because of this difficulty, these areas were included in the discussion but only principals' and teachers' responses were compared statistically.

These areas and the responses given by informants are described more fully in the instrument given in Appendix B and in the Resumé of Findings in Appendix C.

Statistical Analysis

The data permit rank ordering but not statements of equality of intervals. Therefore the variables are ordinal. Because of this, a nonparametric statistic was selected (Ferguson, 1959). As the data can be reduced to frequencies (Guilford, 1956) and differences between groups were compared (McNemar, 1949), chi square was used.

Table 1 gives the number of informants in each group considering each problem detrimental to the education of disadvantaged children. Table 2 gives the levels of significance of the differences of perceptions of each group in relation to each of the other two groups.

TABLE 1

TOTAL NUMBER IN EACH GROUP PERCEIVING EACH AREA AS A PROBLEM^a

Problem Area	Parents	Principals	Teachers
1. Parental Interest	12	17	23
2. Student Interest	20	20	15
3. Clothing	27	13	13
4. School Costs	28	16	15
5. Teaching Methods	13	10	9
6. School Discipline	15	13	14
7. School Program	8	10	17
8. Health	-	16	18
9. Parental Information	14	21	26
10. Outside Interests	14	25	23
11. Social Acceptance	11	15	9
12. Absenteeism	-	18	24
13. Transiency	-	23	26
14. Preschool Experience	6	24	22

^a The number in each group is 30.

TABLE 2

LEVEL OF STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN GROUPS AS TO PRESENCE OF PROBLEM IN EACH AREA

Problem Area	χ^2 ^a	Parent-Principal Level of Significance	χ^2	Parent-Teacher Level of Significance	χ^2	Principal-Teacher Level of Significance
1. Parental Interest	1.67	.20	8.29	.01	2.70	.20
2. Student Interest	0.00	1.00	1.71	.20	1.71	.20
3. Clothing	14.70	.001	14.70	.001	0.00	1.00
4. School Costs	12.27	.001	13.88	.001	0.07	.80
5. Teaching Methods	0.63	.50	1.15	.30	0.08	.70
6. School Discipline	0.27	.70	0.07	.80	0.07	.80
7. School Program	0.32	.70	5.55	.02	3.29	.10
8. Health	--	--	--	--	0.27	.70
9. Parental Information	3.36	.10	10.80	.01	0.25	.70
10. Outside Interests	8.86	.01	5.71	.02	0.42	.70
11. Social Acceptance	1.08	.30	0.33	.70	2.50	.20
12. Absenteeism	--	--	--	--	2.86	.10
13. Transiency	--	--	--	--	1.00	.50
14. Preschool Experience	21.60	.001	17.14	.001	0.37	.70

^a For 1 degree of freedom chi square values required for statistical significance are as follows:
.05 -- 3.84, .02 -- 5.41, .01 -- 6.64 and .001 -- 10.83.

II. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Discussion of Problem Areas

A more complete list of responses and suggestions for alleviating difficulties is found in Appendix C, Resume of Findings.

Parental interest. Parents and teachers differed in their perception of the problem of parental interest in education. This difference was significant at the .01 level. Teachers in this sample perceived low income parents as much less interested in their children's education than the parents considered themselves. The reason most frequently given by both teachers and principals for this lack of interest was that low income parents were unable to see the value of an education for their children. The only reason given by parents for lacking interest in education was that long range educational plans were unrealistic as students had to get jobs to support themselves as early as possible.

Student interest in education. The findings in this area were not statistically significant. Teachers and principals generally considered student disinterest a function of parent disinterest and lack of information. Parents saw student disinterest as a response to the urgent economic needs of students and their families.

Ability to procure suitable school clothing for students. Thirteen teachers and thirteen principals saw provision of school clothing as a problem for low income families while 27 parents regarded this as a problem area. The difference in opinion was significant at the .001 level. It appears probable that school personnel generally do not appreciate the difficulty of low income parents in making their children reasonably presentable for school.

Several parents of teenage children mentioned how conspicuous their children felt when they were unable to dress like their classmates. One mother stated that no one at her children's school realized that the family was deprived as she went to great pains with their clothing. One principal said that his school avoided dress-up days and formal graduations as he found that children from low income homes preferred to miss such functions rather than appear in inadequate clothing. From various comments made, it would appear that clothing is very important in the social acceptance and self-esteem of disadvantaged students. Several informants, both parents and school personnel, felt that recent relaxing of school dress regulations had helped economically disadvantaged families. A number of principals and teachers mentioned that disadvantaged students attending schools in predominantly middle-income neighbourhoods were painfully aware of their worn and second-hand clothing.

School costs. Teachers and principals disagreed with parents on the difficulty of paying school costs which include book rentals and purchases, buying school supplies and paying various fees (see Appendix B). The difference in perception of this problem was significant at the .001 level. Nearly all families interviewed considered the payment of school costs to be extremely burdensome. Most parents said that teachers were understanding if told the money would be sent to school as soon as possible. Four parents stated that their children had been severely scolded when they had been unable to bring money promptly, two said their children were reminded of their debts in class with other children present, two students allegedly had been excluded from their home rooms and one child had been left alone while the rest of her class went on a field trip. Several parents said that their children had been urged to make charitable donations. It was pointed out that the sale of tickets by school children usually meant that parents had

to purchase the tickets if the children were not to return them unsold. One child who returned all tickets unsold was allegedly called uncooperative by his teacher. Several parents stated that their children became upset to the point of tears when told that money requested by the school was not readily available.

Six parents, three principals and four teachers thought that parents should pay no school costs.

Teaching methods. There was little difference in perceptions in the area of suitability of teaching methods. Parents interviewed felt that their children were sometimes given inadequate explanations on how to do their work. Several parents stated that, as they themselves were poorly educated, it was impossible for them to give their children assistance with school work. Among the school personnel who thought that the teaching of disadvantaged children could be improved, most felt that smaller classes would help.

School discipline. Differences in perceptions of the effectiveness of school discipline with children of low income families were not significant. There were opposing views on the effectiveness of school discipline among school personnel. Thirteen principals felt that customary school discipline methods were less effective with these children, while five considered them more effective. Among teachers, fourteen found disadvantaged children more difficult to control in school while five found them easier to control. The age of the children did not seem to account for this difference. Three principals said that the parents of this group did not reinforce school discipline, but two said that low income parents were more cooperative in this respect.

It would appear from these data that evidence as to whether the "jungle school" (Levin, 1965) exists in the Edmonton systems at the present time is equivocal.

Suitability of school programs. Both parents and principals found less to criticize in the school programs than did the teachers who carried them out in the classroom. The parent group showed least disapproval of programs. Teachers and parents differed in their perceptions of the suitability of school programs for economically disadvantaged students. This difference was significant at the .02 level. Teachers were especially critical of the middle class bias of readers and other teaching materials. A need was felt for materials that would reflect the experiences of children in lower income neighbourhoods. Teachers and principals differed in their perceptions of the suitability of existing school programs for disadvantaged students. This difference was significant at the .10 level.

Health. Because the parent group had difficulty in answering this question, their answers were not treated statistically. The families in the sample seemed to have generally poor health. During the past year, eight parents reported their children had dental problems, six reported tonsillitis, four pneumonia, two allergies, two ear infections, two cases of whooping cough, two cases of eczema and one case of tuberculosis. At the time of the interview, six of the seven children of one family had just returned from hospital after food poisoning. A member of the same family had periodic convulsions. One family had mumps when first approached while another had chicken-pox. One child had an infected throat and another had croup. One pre-adolescent had a hernia and another boy of the same age had ulcers. The children of one family had impetigo, one child had appendicitis and another hepatitis. Chronic conditions included one cleft

palate, one partially blind child and one partially deaf child. Even considering the relatively large size of these families, such a health record seems rather poor.

Two informants expressed concern over the closing of the Out-patient Department of the University Hospital. This department had apparently been their only medical contact. Informants were encouraged to chat about health histories but were asked only the questions included on the interview schedule. Several mentioned that when they told their social workers of medical and dental problems they had received prompt attention. One mother mentioned having difficulty in dealing with a physician and being successful after requesting a social worker to arbitrate.

Parental information on the school. Parents generally considered themselves better informed on school affairs than they were thought to be by teachers and principals. These differences in attitudes were significant at the .01 and .10 levels respectively. School personnel perceived this lack of information generally as a function of parent disinterest, while parents gave a variety of reasons (see Appendix C). Six principals and five teachers stated that low income parents were afraid to come to the school. Two parents felt that the school ignored them, while three stated their schools refused to give information even when asked. One parent was very upset that the high school her daughter attended did not notify her when the girl was absent. The daughter had missed five days of school before her parents were notified. One mother stated that if the school personnel were unable to teach her daughter, she could not help them.

Students' outside interests. Parents tended to be happier with the development of their children's extracurricular interests than were principals or teachers. The levels of probability of these differences

in attitudes toward the development of extracurricular interests among disadvantaged students were .01 and .02 respectively.

School personnel generally felt that economically disadvantaged students could seldom afford sports equipment, money for after school parties and dances, or the lessons needed to develop musical, artistic and athletic talents. The Recreation Department's excellent programs were mentioned, but several parents stated they could not afford the supposedly nominal fees. One principal living in a high income area said that fees were lower and services more extensive in his area than in the disadvantaged area where his pupils resided. According to informants, community club fees vary throughout the city.

Several teachers and principals recommended extension of the facilities of the Recreation Department. No parents mentioned this possibility.

Social acceptance. There were no statistically significant differences of opinion among the three groups on this question. Parents responding to this question felt that appropriate clothing was most important in the acceptance of their children, while school personnel considered personal hygiene and social skills to be important as well.

Absenteeism. Because parents often found this question difficult to answer, their responses were not treated statistically. Teachers and principals disagreed on the amount of absenteeism, with teachers considering the children of low income families as more prone to absenteeism. However, this difference in attitude was significant only at the .10 level. This slight difference may have occurred because the teachers taught in the same district of the city while principals were in widely separated schools.

When there are preschool children in the home, older children

sometimes miss school to babysit. Among families who have recently immigrated to Canada, school children occasionally serve as interpreters on visits to physicians or the employment office.

Transiency. Again, parents had difficulty responding to this question, so their responses were not treated statistically. Other findings were not significant.

Some school personnel assumed frequent moves were generally at the landlord's request because of poor housekeeping and other undesirable characteristics of tenants. Homes visited in the course of this study ranged from comfortable to almost uninhabitable. Several houses appeared to be structurally unsound and were very poorly heated. Generally, homes seemed internally well-kept and clean. Many homes were very sparsely furnished, but the ones which were decrepit appeared to have taken many years to reach that state and showed no discernible signs of any recent repairs by landlords. Three families stated that when their landlords discovered they were on welfare, their rents had gone up. One family said that this rent increase had to come out of the food budget. Four room, basementless, unpainted and poorly heated buildings were reportedly being rented for \$120 a month and up. All informants living in such places were eagerly anticipating moving. Eight families, largely in this type of housing, considered themselves as being highly transient.

Preschool experiences. Only six parents considered that the children of low income families start school at a disadvantage because of preschool experiences different to those of the children of more

affluent families. Twenty-four principals and twenty-two teachers considered economically disadvantaged children to start school at a disadvantage which can be overcome by preschool experiences of the type given by kindergartens. The differences in perception between parents and school personnel on the need for special preschool programs for the children of low income families were statistically significant at the .001 level.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

It appears from the 1961 Canada Census that many disadvantaged students do not achieve as high an educational level as students from advantaged families (Porter, 1965). The three groups in the study are those most concerned with the education of these students, their parents, teachers and school principals. The following questions were investigated:

What were the barriers to the education of economically disadvantaged children as perceived by their parents, teachers and principals?

Were the same barriers perceived as important by the three groups or were there areas of disagreement among them?

An examination of the literature on the education of the poor and a pilot study showed fourteen areas frequently considered to be important in the low educational achievement of disadvantaged students. These fourteen areas were:

1. parental interest in education;
2. student interest in education;
3. ability to procure suitable school clothing for students;
4. ability to pay school costs promptly and without hardship;
5. teaching methods used;
6. amenability of students to school type discipline;
7. suitability of school programs;
8. physical health of students;

9. parental information on the aims and function of the school;
10. opportunity of students to cultivate their special interests and talents;
11. social acceptance of students by their peers;
12. absenteeism from school;
13. transiency causing loss of school time and frequent school transfers and
14. preschool experiences useful as a basis for elementary school learning.

These areas formed the basis for the interview schedule included in Appendix B. Two forms, A and B, of the schedule were prepared when it was discovered that different wording was required to elicit similar information from school personnel and from parents.

The parent group was made up of informants from thirty families who were receiving social assistance from the City of Edmonton at the time of the study. Parents were asked for the names of the schools attended by their children and thirty principals of these schools were randomly selected for interviews. The 1961 Canada Census found census tracts 15 and 20 to be the most disadvantaged in Edmonton (Alberta. Executive Council, vol. 2, 1967). Thirty teachers were randomly selected from the five schools in these areas for interviews. It can be assumed that all teachers and principals in the sample had contact with children whose parents received social assistance.

The total number of informants in each group considering an area to present more of a problem to economically disadvantaged than to

advantaged students was computed. The total for each group in each area was then compared to the totals for the other two groups in the same area using the nonparametric statistic of chi square.

Perceptions of the barriers to effective education most often recognized by each group differ. Parents saw barriers as largely economic. The ones mentioned most frequently were difficulty in providing clothing and paying school costs. These were followed by lack of student interest, considered by most parents as a function of the students' need to find employment as soon as possible. Principals perceived disadvantaged students as having poorly developed interests, lacking appropriate preschool activities for early development and being highly transient. Teachers saw children of low income families as frequently absent and highly transient. They also considered lack of parental information as detrimental to the aims of the school.

There were several areas of disagreement among the three groups. Teachers and parents differed in their perceptions of the problem of parental interest in education. This difference was significant at the .01 level. Parents disagreed with teachers and principals on the difficulty of procuring school clothing, paying school costs and lack of appropriate preschool experiences. These differences were significant at the .001 level. The difference in attitudes of parents and teachers on the suitability of present school programs for disadvantaged pupils was at the .02 level of significance and, in the same area, teachers' and principals' perceptions differed at the .10 level of significance. Teachers and principals disagreed with parents on the amount of information parents possessed as to the aims and purposes of the school. These differences in attitude were significant at the .01 and .10 levels respectively. In the present study, the .05 level was accepted as statistically significant.

Conclusions

In only two areas did the differences between teachers and principals approach a statistically significant level. These were the questions concerning absenteeism among the children of low income families and the suitability of school programs presently available to these students. However, there were several areas of disagreement between parents and school personnel. These areas may indicate a serious lack of communication between the school and these parents. The viewpoints of parents, teachers and principals are important and there seems to be a real need for these groups to share their insights and experiences. If some parents are being treated with less than courtesy by the schools and if they are afraid to drop in for a chat with the principal and teachers, one of our most valuable sources of feedback is lost. Increased contact between home and school appears desirable. One way to accomplish this might be to train future teachers to communicate with parents. Part of student teacher training might well be to contact homes, enabling teacher trainees to gain insight into the lives of low income families. This might be possible by having students conduct tutorial sessions and assist in community projects in low income neighbourhoods. Teachers and parents need more opportunities for communication. The best method for achieving this appears to be teacher visits to homes.

From comments of parents on the pressure some children feel over having to take money to school, it would appear that students should be used to collect money from parents and other sources only with great caution, if at all. A child who must request money that is not available from his parents and then face a teacher's disapproval is under a stress that is not appropriate for learning.

Some low income families in Edmonton are living in deplorable housing, through no fault of their own. Housing is outside the scope of this study

but it seems obvious that measures should be taken at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to provide adequate inexpensive homes and to force the landlords of substandard housing to improve their properties.

Most school personnel mentioned Recreation Department programs while very few economically disadvantaged parents did so. Although such an investigation is not part of this study, it might be useful to ascertain if city sponsored facilities are adequately used by the low income families who need them most or if they are unable to use them because of transportation difficulties, the need for payment of fees, lack of information on available services or other reasons. If findings warrant, appropriate revisions in these programs could be made.

There is a need for research as to causes and amount of absenteeism and transiency among low income families. The literature and the present study do not answer the question of whether economically disadvantaged students miss more school than other children.

Research is needed on the health of families of the poor as compared to that of more affluent families. It would be helpful in preventive programs to know which conditions and illnesses tend to occur more frequently in disadvantaged homes. It would not be difficult to compare the health records of a group of deprived persons with those of a middle income group. Such a study could be done locally to take into consideration the diet in this region as well as the effect of our climate. With adequate information, health and preventive programs might become more effective.

Several teachers and principals reported that deprived children

were often avoided by their classmates because of their offensive odour. Elementary children can be taught personal hygiene and grooming as part of the school health program if they are shown what to do and given school time and facilities to practise cleanliness. Perhaps elementary schools need shower facilities as much as high schools do. So long as neither parents nor children are insulted, there seems to be no reason why children cannot practise hygienic habits in school.

A useful extension of this study would be to investigate the perceptions of lower income students themselves as to their difficulties in school.

Local school boards are becoming interested in establishing kindergartens. School personnel appear to agree that such experience is desirable for economically disadvantaged children. The parents in this sample do not seem aware of such a need. It appears that the parents of the children supposedly most in need of preschool experiences will have to be persuaded of the usefulness of these programs.

Finally, there is a need to procure and use information on education from all available sources. In the literature reviewed for this study on the education of economically disadvantaged children, opinions given were generally those of the authors, not those of persons involved in the education of these children. As a result, such literature often tends to be divorced from the everyday life of the classrooms and homes of these children. The parents, teachers and school principals of these students could well be considered most familiar with the problems of this field of education. The more these three groups can blend their experience, knowledge and insights, the brighter will be the future of our economically disadvantaged children.

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APPENDIX A
PILOT STUDY FORM

Canada's 1961 census showed a wide discrepancy between the length of time spent in school by students whose parents have a high income and those whose families have a below average income. Many opinions have been expressed as to why children from poorer homes do not receive maximum benefit from our educational system. However, the views of school teachers and administrators are too seldom heard. Please indicate below your experience as a teacher and/or administrator and give your ideas on what might cause students from low income families to leave school before they are adequately educated. After each cause you suggest, please list possible ways of overcoming that problem.

Experience -- Teacher _____ Number of years _____

Administrator _____ Number of years _____ Position _____

1. Cause _____

Possible solutions _____

2. Cause _____

Possible solutions _____

3. Cause _____

Possible solutions _____

4. Cause _____

Possible solutions _____

5. Cause _____

Possible solutions _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B
THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Directions for Administering Interview Schedule

"Barriers to the Education of Economically Disadvantaged Students," Forms A and B

Task of the Interviewer

Form A of the interview schedule is designed for administration to school personnel. Form B is administered to economically disadvantaged parents.

It is important to note that only the questions or statements marked with an asterisk are to be asked in all interviews. In no case does the interviewer suggest answers to these questions. The main task of the interviewer is to ask such questions as may be needed to clarify respondent answers.

The check lists serve as a quick method of recording respondent's answers. Items from the check lists, marked a, b, c and so on, are never read aloud by the interviewer.

Conducting the Interview

All items marked with an asterisk are read to the respondents and Y for Yes or N for No is circled. In Questions *1, *2 and *5, the interviewer asks such questions as are necessary to narrow down the problem before remedial methods are requested. Samples of questions which can be asked are supplied in the schedule. The interviewer asks for clarification of suggestions for remediation made by respondents until the suggestion is clearly either one of those in the check list, which can then be ticked off, or a more unusual response which can be recorded verbatim after "other". To limit the length of the form, some items in the check list are grouped together, for example *1, subdivision 2, check list item e. If the respondent says that low income parents should be given more information on

money management, the item would be checked and "parents" circled. If the respondent said that students and parents needed such information, the item would be checked and the word "both" circled.

With the exception of *4, no further questioning is done of asterisked items not considered by the respondent to present a problem for low income students. For example, if a respondent states, in reply to *1, that low income parents are interested in the education of their children, the interviewer proceeds directly to *2 and so on. In *4, subdivisions *i) and *ii) are administered to all respondents, as indicated on the form.

Question *8, dealing with the health of low income children, appears in a different form on the parent's schedule and the teacher-principal's schedule. It is very difficult to get this information from parents. The preamble on the parents' form is aimed at getting appropriate remedial practices. This preamble is intended to guide the interviewer and has no comparable form on Schedule A.

This instrument is relatively difficult to administer and is not recommended for use by unskilled interviewers. It is intended as a means of collecting a wide range of information that is not at present available to persons concerned with the education of economically disadvantaged students.

Barriers to the Education of Economically Disadvantaged Students - Form A
For School Personnel

Canada's 1961 census showed a wide discrepancy between the length of time spent in school by students whose parents have a high income and those whose families have a below average income. Many opinions have been expressed as to why children from poorer homes do not receive maximum benefit from our educational system. However, the views of school teachers/administrators are seldom heard. I would like to get yours now.

(Circle Y or N for items with asterisk except 4, where other instructions given.)

Y N *1. Lower income parents are less interested than others in their children's education. Would you agree with this? (If No, proceed to *2. If Yes, ask "Why is this?" and check reason as i, ii, or iii. Then ask "How could this be improved?" If suggestions similar to those in list, check those appropriate. If suggestion differs from those in list, write in after "other".)

- ___ i) These parents do not understand the value of education.
 - ___ a) public relations program using news media, pamphlets, TV, etc.
 - ___ b) workshops involving parents
 - ___ c) counselling of parents
 - ___ d) parents given opportunity and encouragement to upgrade own education
 - ___ e) encourage parents to visit career days
 - ___ f) parent teacher meetings, more involvement of parents in school
 - ___ g) foster homes or dorms made available if parents won't cooperate
 - h) other _____
- ___ ii) Parents know students must leave school early to work.
 - ___ a) encourage students to enrol in night courses after leaving school
 - ___ b) give parents special educational allowance after student is 16
 - ___ c) establish programs designed for students working part time
 - ___ d) simplify re-entry into school
 - ___ e) give students / parents / both information on money management
 - ___ f) raise school leaving age to 18
 - ___ g) increase scholarship assistance vocational / academic / both
 - h) other _____
- ___ iii) Parents fear children will become alienated from them.
 - ___ a) counselling of children and parents on maintaining family unit
 - ___ b) counselling of students to help them achieve independence
 - ___ c) legal action
 - d) other _____

Y N *2. Lower income students are less interested in getting an education than are other students. Would you agree with this?

(If Yes, ask "Why is this?" then "How could this be improved?")

___ i) Their parents don't encourage them. (Relate to parental attitudes in *1. Ask "Why is this?" and record responses not previously given.)

___ ii) These students do not realize the value of an education.

___ a) public relations program

___ b) early counselling of children

___ c) more awareness of possibilities by broadening experiences, movies, trips, summer camps, etc.

___ d) career days

___ e) members of staff chosen to include suitable models

___ f) school programs adapted to local area and conditions

___ g) show students consequences of limited education

h) other _____

___ iii) These students have no interest in long range goals.

___ a) remedial / individualized instruction

___ b) concentrate on giving success experiences in school

___ c) raise school leaving age to 18

___ d) train them (get specific ways) _____

e) other _____

___ iv) Their friends influence these students to be uninterested in school.

___ a) increased community involvement in supervised recreation programs

___ b) increased school involvement in supervised recreation programs

___ c) encourage groups of students to continue on in school by group counselling

___ d) government attack on poverty pockets

e) other _____

Y N *3. Do you think that dressing like the other students is a problem for many lower class students?

(If No, proceed to *4. If Yes, ask, "What could be done to improve this?" Check off listed suggestions given. Write those not listed under "other".)

- ☐ a) avoid dress regulations
- ☐ b) do not allow students to wear stylish clothes
- ☐ c) use school uniforms
- ☐ d) make special funds available / more clothing allowance
- ☐ e) teach girls to make their own clothes
- ☐ f) some form of segregation such as special classes
- ☐ g) other _____

Y N *4. Do you think that lower income parents often have great difficulty in paying school costs? (If Yes, administer all parts. If No, administer only parts *i and *ii and then proceed to *5.)

*i) What things do parents have to pay for in this school? (Check items in first column.)

Check	Cross	Source of expense.
___	___	a) book rentals / book purchases (Circle response given.)
___	___	b) supplies, notebooks, art supplies, etc.
___	___	c) fees for swimming, skating, bowling, etc.
___	___	d) library fees
___	___	e) art and handicraft supplies
___	___	f) sports equipment which is not provided by the school
___	___	g) musical instruments
___	___	h) treats for parties
___	___	i) magazine and newspaper subscriptions
___	___	j) ticket sales and other fund raising activities
___	___	k) other _____

Y N * Do you / your teachers sometimes have difficulty collecting money requested?

* ii) What happens when children are late bringing in money?

- ___ a) teachers mention it in class
- ___ b) teachers tell who is late with the money
- ___ c) teachers scold children
- ___ d) students feel badly, but it's not mentioned that they are late
- ___ e) students just bring it in when they can - no comment is made

f) other _____

(iii and iv are given only when the response to *4 is Yes.)

iii) You mentioned -- (read from Source of expense list given). Do you think any of these things should be provided by the school rather than by the parents? (Mark those considered the responsibility of the school in column 2 with a cross.)

iv) What other ways can you think of to take some of this financial burden from the parents?

- ___ a) books, supplies, materials should be free to all
- ___ b) books, supplies, materials should be free to the needy
- ___ c) children should be taught to take better care of what they've got
- ___ d) no fees for sports and extracurricular activities
- ___ e) arts and craft supplies, skates, musical instruments, sports equipment, etc. should be supplied free
- ___ f) there should be a central non-profit agency selling supplies
- ___ g) children should not be involved in fund raising
- ___ h) children should bring money when they can, not be constantly reminded
- ___ i) school parties should be avoided or paid for from a central fund
- ___ j) other _____

Y N *5. Do teachers handle lower class children as effectively as they do middle class children? (If Yes, proceed to *6. If No, ask "How could teachers handle these children more effectively?" Check off suggested ways. If unlisted, write in "other".)

___ i) Individualization

- ___ a) more individualization and remediation
- ___ b) smaller classes
- ___ c) use of teacher aides
- ___ d) segregated classes
- ___ e) more flexibility in matching teacher and class
- ___ f) other _____

___ ii) Teacher standards

- ___ a) select more experienced teachers
- ___ b) select better qualified teachers
- ___ c) select teachers with backgrounds similar to students
- ___ d) give teachers higher salaries / more prestige (Circle response.)
- ___ e) provide university courses in teaching these children
- ___ f) in-service training programs for local needs
- ___ g) concentrate best teachers in primary grades
- ___ h) other _____

___ iii) Teacher attitudes

- ___ a) increase parent-teacher contact
- ___ b) avoidance of the self-fulfilling prophecy of low achievement of low income children
- ___ c) increased sensitivity to children by inservice training / university courses / other _____
- ___ d) other _____

Y N *6. Do you think that school discipline is less effective with lower class than with middle class children?

(If No, go on to *7. If Yes, proceed with all parts. Ask, "why is this?"

- ☐ a) lower class children do not seem to understand it
- ☐ b) lower class children seem to need harsher punishments than others
- ☐ c) parents will not back up school discipline
- ☐ d) other _____

i) What kinds of trouble do lower class children generally get into?

- ☐ a) aggressive behavior
- ☐ b) stealing
- ☐ c) overt sexuality
- ☐ d) other _____

ii) How do you think the school could do a better job of disciplining these children?

- ☐ a) increased parent-school contact
- ☐ b) workshops / university courses / in-service training of teachers to enable them to understand motivations of lower class child
- ☐ c) more corporal punishment by school for these children
- ☐ d) more counselling by school for these children
- ☐ e) other _____

Y N *7. Do you find that the school program is planned for the middle class rather than the lower class child? (If No, proceed to *8. If Yes, ask, "How could the school program be improved for lower class children?")

i) Change in emphasis

___ a) less time should be spent on _____

___ b) more time should be spent on _____

___ c) work-study type program

d) other _____

ii) Extension of services

___ a) more guidance counsellors / remedialists / psychologists /
medical personnel / school social workers / others _____

___ b) school facilities, libraries, labs, etc. to remain open after school

___ c) group holidays and trips sponsored by school

d) other _____

iii) Updating facilities and equipment

___ a) better school equipment is needed

___ b) better school buildings are needed

c) other _____

iv) Individualization of education

___ a) high school students should have more freedom in choosing courses

___ b) there should be more guidance in choosing courses

___ c) the more able student should be allowed to advance more rapidly

___ d) homogeneous grouping

e) other _____

v) Administrators

___ a) should have more responsibility for local programs

___ b) should be better trained than they are now

___ c) should show more flexibility

d) other _____

vi) Research

___ a) more curriculum research is needed

___ b) teachers should be taught to use what there is now

c) other _____

Y N *8. Do you find that children of lower income families frequently have health problems which cause them to miss school and to learn less effectively even when they are present? (If Yes, ask, "How might this be prevented?" If No, proceed to *9.)

- ☐ a) more thorough check-ups of school children for better prevention
- ☐ b) public low income housing
- ☐ c) more training in personal hygiene
- ☐ d) hot lunches at school
- ☐ e) other _____

Y N *9. Would you say that lower income families have a higher rate of transiency than others, causing these students to miss school and change schools quite frequently? (If No, proceed to *10. If Yes, ask, "How might this be prevented?")

- ☐ a) low cost public housing
- ☐ b) increased welfare allowance for rent
- ☐ c) other _____

Y N *10. Do you find that these children sometimes miss school because they are kept home to work for their parents? (If No, proceed to *11. If Yes, ask "How might this be prevented?")

- ☐ a) day nurseries with baby sitting services
- ☐ b) volunteer mother's helpers
- ☐ c) more truancy officers
- ☐ d) fines for parents
- ☐ e) stricter family allowance regulations
- ☐ f) counselling advice from school
- ☐ g) other _____

Y N *11. In your opinion, do these parents often lack information on what the school is doing? (If No, proceed to *12. If Yes, ask "Why is this?")

- ☐ a) parents avoid coming to the school (ask Why?) _____
- ☐ b) no regular PTA meetings (Why?) _____
- ☐ c) parent has no time / babysitter
- ☐ d) parent feels out of place / lacking in meaningful contributions at school / parent-teacher meetings
- ☐ e) parent lacks English / education to understand what is going on
- ☐ f) other _____

Do you have any suggestions for improving this?

- ☐ a) school personnel to make more home visits
- ☐ b) baby sitting services at PTA and other events at school
- ☐ c) school personnel should pay more attention / be more polite
- ☐ d) duty of principal to involve parents
- ☐ e) report cards should give more information
- ☐ f) children should be allowed to take books home to show parents
- ☐ g) other _____

Y N *12. Do you think that children of lower income parents are often unable to develop their special interests and hobbies? (If No, proceed to *13. If Yes, ask, "How could they be helped to follow up their special interests?")

- ☐ a) free materials and instructions for interests -- music, photography, etc. should be provided by school
- ☐ b) these should be provided by community agencies
- ☐ c) parents should be assisted in providing these
- ☐ d) more information should be distributed on what is presently available
- ☐ e) other _____

Y N *13. Do you think that these children are often rejected by their middle class schoolmates? (If No, proceed to *14. If Yes, ask "When does this happen?")

- ☐ a) when their clothes aren't the same
- ☐ b) when they can't bring the money the teachers ask for
- ☐ c) when they aren't too clean
- ☐ d) when they can't join in sports or other extracurricular activities
- ☐ e) when their manners are different (specify) _____
- ☐ f) other _____

How could this be avoided?

- ☐ a) if clothing indicated as a problem, relate back to *3 and record any information not already given under *3
- ☐ b) avoid collecting money at school
- ☐ c) more instruction in personal hygiene and grooming
- ☐ d) all extracurricular events free
- ☐ e) counselling
- ☐ f) other _____

Y N *14. Have you found that these children are frequently less ready than middle class children to do grade one work? (If No, the interview is finished. If Yes, ask "How do you think they might be helped?")

- ☐ a) free kindergartens sponsored by school board
- ☐ b) best teachers kept for primary grades
- ☐ c) other _____

Barriers to the Education of Economically Disadvantaged Students -- Form B For Parents

It would appear from the 1961 Canada census that, in general, students from homes where money is limited may have difficulty in finishing high school and going further. I'd like your opinions as to why this should be so. (Circle Y or N for items with asterisk except 4, where other instructions given.)

Y N *1. Some people say that many parents with more limited incomes do not expect their children to finish high school and take further training. Would you agree with this?

(If No, proceed to *2. If Yes, ask "Why is this?" and check reason as i, ii or iii. Then ask "How can this be improved?". If suggestions approximate those in list, check off appropriate ones. If a suggestion obviously differs from those in list, write in after "other".)

___ i) These parents do not understand the value of education.

- ___ a) public relations program involving news media, pamphlets, TV, etc.
- ___ b) workshops involving parents
- ___ c) counselling of parents
- ___ d) parents given more opportunity, encouragement to upgrade own education
- ___ e) encourage parents to visit career days
- ___ f) parent teacher meetings, more involvement of parents in school
- ___ g) foster homes or dorms made available if parents won't cooperate

h) other _____

___ ii) The parents know students must leave school early to work.

- ___ a) encourage students to enrol in night courses after leaving school
- ___ b) give parents special educational allowance after student is 16
- ___ c) establish programs designed for students working part time
- ___ d) simplify re-entry into school
- ___ e) give students / parents / both information on money management
- ___ f) raise school leaving age to 18
- ___ g) increase scholarship assistance vocational / academic / both

h) other _____

___ iii) Parents fear children will become alienated from them.

- ___ a) counselling of children and parents on maintaining family unit
- ___ b) counselling of students to help them achieve independence
- ___ c) legal action

d) other _____

Y N *2. You also hear sometimes that these students are not too interested in finishing high school and going on. Do you think that this is generally true? (If Yes, ask "Why is this?" then "How could this be improved?")

___ i) Their parents don't encourage them. (Relate to parental attitudes in *1. Ask "Why is this?" and record responses not previously given.)

___ ii) These students do not realize the value of an education.

___ a) public relations program

___ b) early ccounselling of children

___ c) more awareness of possibilities by broadening experiences, movies, trips, summer camps, etc.

___ d) career days

___ e) members of staff chosen to include suitable models

___ f) school programs adapted to local area and conditions

___ g) show students consequences of limited education

___ h) other _____

___ iii) These students have no interest in long range goals.

___ a) remedial / individualized instruction

___ b) concentrate on giving success experiences in school

___ c) raise school leaving age to 18

___ d) train them (get specific ways) _____

___ e) other _____

___ iv) Their friends influence these students to be uninterested in school.

___ a) increased community involvement in supervised recreation programs

___ b) increased school involvement in supervised recreation programs

___ c) encourage groups of students to continue on in school by group counselling

___ d) government attack on poverty pockets

___ e) other _____

Y N *3. Do you think that dressing like the others is a problem for many students?

(If No, proceed to *4. If Yes, ask, "What could be done to improve this?" Check off listed suggestions given. Write those not listed under "other".)

- ☐ a) avoid dress regulations
- ☐ b) do not allow students to wear stylish clothes
- ☐ c) use school uniforms
- ☐ d) make special funds available / more clothing allowance
- ☐ e) teach girls to make their own clothes
- ☐ f) some form of segregation such as special classes
- ☐ g) other _____

*4. It takes a lot of money to keep a child in school. What school costs do you have to pay? (Check items mentioned in first column.)

Check	Cross	Source of expense.
___	___	a) book rentals / book purchases (Circle response given.)
___	___	b) supplies, notebooks, art supplies, etc.
___	___	c) fees for swimming, skating, bowling, etc.
___	___	d) library fees
___	___	e) art and handicraft supplies
___	___	f) sports equipment which is not provided by the school
___	___	g) musical instruments
___	___	h) treats for parties
___	___	i) magazine and newspaper subscriptions
___	___	j) ticket sales and other fund raising activities
___	___	k) other _____

Y N * Do you sometimes have difficulty sending money when it is requested? (If Yes, administer all parts. If No, administer *ii only.)

*ii) What happens when children are late bringing the money?

- ___ a) teachers mention it in class
- ___ b) teachers tell who is late with the money
- ___ c) teachers scold children
- ___ d) students feel badly, but it's not mentioned that they are late
- ___ e) students just bring it in when they can - no comment is made

f) other _____

iii) You mentioned -- (read from Source of expense list given). Do you think any of these things should be provided by the school rather than by the parents? (Mark those considered the responsibility of the school in column 2 with a cross.)

iv) What other ways can you think of to take some of this financial burden from the parents?

- ___ a) books, supplies, materials should be free to all
- ___ b) books, supplies, materials should be free to the needy
- ___ c) children should be taught to take better care of what they've got
- ___ d) no fees for sports and extracurricular activities
- ___ e) arts and craft supplies, skates, musical instruments, sports equipment, etc. should be supplied free
- ___ f) there should be a central non-profit agency selling supplies
- ___ g) children should not be involved in fund raising
- ___ h) children should bring money when they can, not be constantly reminded
- ___ i) school parties should be avoided or paid for from a central fund
- ___ j) other _____

Y N *5. Can you think of ways that the teachers could do a better job of handling your children? (If No, proceed to *6. If Yes, ask "What are some of these ways?" Check off suggested ways. If unlisted, write in "other".)

___ i) Individualization

- ___ a) more individualization and remediation
- ___ b) smaller classes
- ___ c) use of teacher aides
- ___ d) segregated classes
- ___ e) more flexibility in matching teacher and class
- ___ f) other _____

___ ii) Teacher standards

- ___ a) select more experienced teachers
- ___ b) select better qualified teachers
- ___ c) select teachers with backgrounds similar to students
- ___ d) give teachers higher salaries / more prestige (Circle response.)
- ___ e) provide university courses in teaching these children
- ___ f) in-service training programs for local needs
- ___ g) concentrate best teachers in primary grades
- ___ h) other _____

___ iii) Teacher attitudes

- ___ a) increase parent-teacher contact
- ___ b) avoidance of the self-fulfilling prophecy of low achievement of low income children
- ___ c) increased sensitivity to children by inservice training / university courses / other _____
- ___ d) other _____

Y N *6. Do you approve of the way your children are disciplined at school?
(If Yes, proceed to *7. If No, ask "Why not?")

- ☐ a) they sometimes don't know why they are in trouble
- ☐ b) they don't pay any attention to it-- it's too soft
- ☐ c) I prefer to discipline my own child
- ☐ d) other _____

i) What kinds of trouble do your children sometimes get into?

- ☐ a) aggressive behaviour
- ☐ b) stealing
- ☐ c) overt sexuality
- ☐ d) other _____

ii) How do you think the school could do a better job of disciplining your children?

- ☐ a) increased parent-school contact
- ☐ b) workshops / university courses / in-service training of teachers to enable them to understand motivations of lower class child
- ☐ c) more corporal punishment by school for these children
- ☐ d) more counselling by school for these children
- ☐ c) other _____

Y N *7. Do you think the school program could be improved? Could the school do a better job of teaching students things more useful to them? (If No, proceed to *8. If Yes, ask, "How? What changes would you like to see?")

i) Change in emphasis

___ a) less time should be spent on _____

___ b) more time should be spent on _____

___ c) work-study type program

d) other _____

ii) Extension of services

___ a) more guidance counsellors / remedialists / psychologists /
medical personnel / school social workers / others _____

___ b) school facilities, libraries, labs, etc. to remain open after school

___ c) group holidays and trips sponsored by school

d) other _____

iii) Updating facilities and equipment

___ a) better school equipment is needed

___ b) better school buildings are needed

c) other _____

iv) Individualization of education

___ a) high school students should have more freedom in choosing courses

___ b) there should be more guidance in choosing courses

___ c) the more able student should be allowed to advance more rapidly

___ d) homogeneous grouping

e) other _____

v) Administrators

___ a) should have more responsibility for local programs

___ b) should be better trained than they are now

___ c) should show more flexibility

d) other _____

vi) Research

___ a) more curriculum research is needed

___ b) teachers should be taught to use what there is now

c) other _____

*8. How do you find your medical services? How could they be improved?
 (Note--This information is difficult to get from parents. The first three questions are asked to lead to suggestions in the check list. The check list is the same as that in Form A, but the leading questions here are not included in Form A.)

Comments _____

* How is the health of your own children? _____

* What is hard on them (if children with illnesses indicated) and how could this be improved?

Special requirements of children, if any _____

___ a) more thorough check-ups of school children for better prevention

___ b) public low income housing

___ c) hot lunches at school

___ d) more training in personal hygiene

e) other _____

*9. Do you find yourself moving fairly often? How many times last year? _____

* Are there any ways that these moves could be prevented?

___ a) low cost public housing

___ b) increased welfare allowance for rent

c) other _____

Y N *10. Do you find that you sometimes have to have a child stay home to help out? When? (If No, go on to *11.)

___ a) baby sitting when mother has to go out

___ b) when mother is ill

c) other _____

Y N Do you think that any community service could be provided to help out?

___ a) day nurseries with baby sitting services

___ b) volunteer mother's helpers

c) other _____

Y N *11. Are you able to find out as much about what your children are doing in school as you would like to? (If Yes, proceed to *12. If No, ask "Why not?" In this section, circle the response given.)

- ☐ a) school does not contact parents / avoids giving information
- ☐ b) there are no regular parent-teacher meetings
- ☐ c) no time / babysitter to go to meetings / school
- ☐ d) feels out of place / ignored at school / parent-teacher meetings
- ☐ e) lacks education / English to understand what is going on
- ☐ f) other _____

Do you have any suggestions for improving this?

- ☐ a) school personnel to make more home visits
- ☐ b) baby sitting services at PTA and other school events
- ☐ c) school personnel should pay more attention / be more polite
- ☐ d) duty of principal to involve parents
- ☐ e) report cards should give more information
- ☐ f) children should be allowed to bring books home to show parents
- ☐ g) other _____

Y N *12. Do you feel that your children have been able to develop their own interests and hobbies in the way you would have liked them to? (If Yes, proceed to *13. If No, ask "Is there any way they could be helped to do this?")

- ☐ a) free materials and instructions for interests-music, photography, etc. provided by school
- ☐ b) these should be provided by community agencies
- ☐ c) parents should be assisted in providing these
- ☐ d) more information should be distributed on what is presently available
- ☐ e) other _____

Y N *13. Do you feel that sometimes your children are given a hard time at school by the other children because they have less money? (If No, proceed to *14. If Yes, ask "When does this happen?")

- ☐ a) when their clothes aren't the same
- ☐ b) when they can't bring the money the teachers ask for
- ☐ c) when they aren't too clean
- ☐ d) when they can't join in sports or other extracurricular activities
- ☐ e) when their manners are different (specify) _____
- ☐ f) other _____

How could this be avoided?

- ☐ a) if clothing indicated as a problem, relate back to *3 and record any information that was not given under *3
- ☐ b) avoid collecting money at school
- ☐ c) more instruction in personal hygiene and grooming
- ☐ d) all extracurricular events free
- ☐ e) counselling
- ☐ f) other _____

Y N *14. We've been talking largely about older students. Do you think that the children of fairly low income families generally have any particular difficulties when they first start school in grade one? (If No, the interview is finished. If Yes, ask "How do you think these difficulties could be overcome or avoided?")

- ☐ a) free kindergartens sponsored by school board
- ☐ b) best teachers kept for primary grades
- ☐ c) other _____

APPENDIX C
RESUME OF FINDINGS

Department of Educational Psychology,
University of Alberta,
March 31, 1969.

Some time ago you assisted me in my research on the difficulties encountered by economically disadvantaged students in getting an adequate education. My study involved interviews with thirty parents receiving social assistance from the City of Edmonton, thirty school principals randomly selected from the public and separate schools attended by the children of the parent group and thirty teachers randomly selected from schools in census tracts 15 and 20. The 1961 Canada Census showed these tracts to be the most economically disadvantaged areas in Edmonton.

The study is now complete, except for the final writing and acceptance by my thesis committee. A resume follows of the opinions of parents, teachers and principals as to which problems are present for disadvantaged students and some possible ways of alleviating these problems.

I would like to thank you for giving me your time and for sharing with me some of your experiences in this area which is presently of so much concern to all of us.

You might wish to see the complete report after it is finished in August. One copy will be available at the Education Library, University of Alberta. Another copy will be sent to
to make it more accessible to you.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Blowers

Barriers to the Education of Economically Disadvantaged Students as Perceived
by their Parents, Teachers and School Principals
Resume of Findings

Each informant was asked whether, in his opinion, each of the 14 items below constituted a problem for many students from economically disadvantaged families. The number of informants from each group indicating that they did consider each item to be a problem is shown.

Possible solutions mentioned by each group are also shown. It should be noted that many of the solutions mentioned are presently part of the policy of some schools in Edmonton.

1. Are lower income parents generally less interested in their children's education? Do they have lower aspirations for their children educationally?

Teachers - 23

- Possible solutions - increased parental involvement in school activities - 4
- increased adult retraining - 3
- counselling - 3

Principals - 17

- Possible solutions - increased parental involvement in school activities - 4
- public relations programs via radio, television and other media on the importance of education - 2

Parents - 12

- Possible solutions - increased financial assistance after age 16 - 2
- increased parental involvement in school activities - 1

2. Are lower income students generally less motivated than others toward getting an education? Do they have lower educational aspirations than students whose parents have more money?

Parents - 20

Of these 20 parents, 13 stated that present needs were of such urgency that students felt they must obtain paid employment as early as possible. No solutions were suggested.

Principals - 20

- Possible solutions - broaden experiences of these students - 4
- counselling on available financial help - 3
- increased scholarship assistance - 2
- counselling on potential earnings and availability of jobs requiring various levels of education - 2

Teachers - 15

- Possible solutions - give students success experiences in school - 2

3. Is procuring suitable school clothing difficult for these students? Do they have difficulty in avoiding appearing conspicuously different to their more affluent classmates?

Parents - 27

- Possible solutions - school uniforms - 10
 - ban the wearing of stylish clothes such as leather garments and mini-skirts - 4
 - teach that there are values more important than style - 3
 - allow girls to wear slacks - 2

Teachers - 13

- Possible solutions - school uniforms - 6
 - teach other values - 4

Principals - 13

- Possible solutions - school uniforms - 6
 - flexible dress regulations - 3

4. Do lower income parents have great difficulty in paying school costs such as buying or renting textbooks, tuition fees, school supplies, sending money for charitable donations and so on?

Parents - 28

- Possible solutions - all school needs should be supplied - 6
 - texts should be supplied - 5
 - school supplies should be sold at cost - 2
 - fewer textbook changes to allow use of second-hand books - 2

Principals - 16

- Possible solutions - all school needs should be supplied to needy - 4
 - all school needs should be supplied to all students - 3

Teachers - 15

- Possible solutions - all school needs should be supplied - 4
 - more should be supplied than is presently done - 2

5. Do teachers teach these children as effectively as they do middle class children?

Parents - 13

Several of these informants mentioned their inability to assist their children with homework and assignments because of their own limited educations.

- Possible solutions - clearer explanations before work is assigned - 7
 - a decrease in the amount of homework given - 3

Principals - 10

- Possible solutions - university courses in sociology, psychology, special education - 8
 - smaller classes - 7
 - select teachers with similar backgrounds - 2
 - inservice training - 2
 - exposure to schools in low income areas during training - 2

Teachers - 9

- Possible solutions - smaller classes - 6
- university courses in sociology, psychology, special education - 5
 - free time to contact parents - 3
 - inservice training - 2
 - more male teachers for low income areas - 2
 - homogeneous grouping - 2
 - more remediation - 2

6. Is school discipline less effective with lower income children than with others?

Parents were asked, "Are you generally in agreement with the way your children are disciplined at school?"

Parents - 15

- Possible solutions - fewer group punishments - 4
- increase parent-school contact on discipline - 4
 - less harsh discipline - 3
 - better student supervision, especially in classrooms - 2

Teachers - discipline is less effective - 14

- discipline is more effective - 5

Each solution was suggested by only one informant.

Principals - discipline is less effective - 13

- discipline is more effective - 5

Possible solutions - increased counselling - 4

- increased parent - school contact - 3

The disagreement on whether school discipline is more or less effective with lower income students is interesting. This difference of opinion does not appear to depend upon the age of the children but may reflect attitudes of individual schools or classrooms on what types of behaviour are expected of students.

7. Is the school program as beneficial to lower income students as it is to others?

Teachers - 17

- Possible solutions - program, especially reading materials, closer to experience of low income students - 11
- curricula developed by teachers - 3
 - learning more trade oriented - 3
 - broaden student experiences - field trips, etc. - 2
 - better school buildings and equipment - 2
 - groups of students selected to progress together - 2
 - more drill and less new mathematics - 2

Principals - 10

- Possible solutions - better buildings and equipment - 5
- more realistic programs and reading materials - 4
 - more varied programs - 2
 - more remediation - 2
 - curricula developed by teachers - 2
 - more audio-visual equipment - 2
 - courses for social-emotional needs of these students - 2

Parents - 8

- Possible solutions - learning more trade oriented - 3
- more varied programs - 2

8. Do lower income children have more health problems than others?
This question asked of parents became quite complex. Parents' answers are discussed in the main report, but are not covered here.

Teachers - 18

- Possible solutions - more school nurse time - 12
- home training of mothers - 4
- more supervision by social workers - 2
- meals at school - 2

Principals - 16 stated this was a problem

- 4 stated that poor health was probably used illegitimately as an excuse for absenteeism

- Possible solutions - more school nurse time - 10
- easily accessible health clinics in low income areas - 2
- meals at school - 2

9. Do low income parents tend more than others to lack information on what the school is doing?

Teachers - 26

Those stating that this was a problem were asked why this was so.

- Reasons - disinterest - 13
- lack education to understand - 7
- lack English to understand - 6
- lack time to attend meetings - 5
- tend to be afraid of school - 5
- have no babysitters to attend meetings - 2

- Possible solutions - more home visits by school personnel - 3
- compulsory interviews - 2
- public relations program - 2
- more involvement of parents in school activities - 2

Principals - 21

- Reasons - disinterest - 13
- lack education to understand - 7
- tend to be afraid of school - 6
- lack time to attend meetings - 3
- lack English to understand - 3

- Possible solutions - staff members and secretaries who speak parents' languages - 3
- contact parents when child is not in trouble at school - 3
- make staff more accessible to parents - 3
- more home visits - 2
- withhold report cards until parents come to school - 2
- persuade low income parents to accept responsibilities in Home and School Association and on School Board advisory committees - 2

Parents - 14

Because the opinions of this group may not often be communicated to the school, all reasons given, even if from only one informant, are included.

Reasons - lack education to understand - 3

- schools avoid giving information to parents when asked - 2
- feels out of place and ignored at school - 2
- no babysitter - 2
- schools give no notification of meetings - 2
- marks on report cards lower than teachers lead parents to expect at interviews - 2
- children allowed to bring home only arithmetic books - 2
- meetings this year on religion only - 1
- no time to go to school - 1
- education is up to the school, not to the parents - 1

Possible solution - increase parent - school contact - 2 No methods mentioned.

10. Are children of low income families frequently unable to develop their special interests and hobbies?

Principals - 25

- these students do not make use of what is available to them - 4

Possible solutions - extended school services - 6

- extended community services for families - 5
- recreation department and school develop services together - 4
- recreational services should be free - 2
- more bursaries and scholarships - 2

Teachers - 23

Possible solutions - extended community services - 8

- extended school services - 6
- counselling - 2

Parents - 14

Possible solution - extended school services - 2

11. Are lower income students accepted by their better-off schoolmates?
Informants stating that these students are rejected were asked why.

Principals - 15

Reasons - personal hygiene - 6

- social ineptness - 5
- when clothing is conspicuously different - 3
- when these students fail in school - 2

Possible solutions - more training in personal hygiene - 2

Parents - 11

Reasons - when clothing is conspicuously different - 4

- when they lack sports equipment, money to buy milk, fruit etc. - 3

One parent stated that her children were rejected on racial, rather than economic, grounds.

Teachers - 9

- Reasons - when clothing is conspicuously different - 4
- personal hygiene - 4
- when they cannot share the interests of others - 2

Possible solution - counselling - 5

12. Are these children frequently kept home to work for their parents, causing high absentee rates?

Teachers - 24

- Possible solutions - local day care centres - 9
- counselling of parents - 3
- they are frequently absent, but it doesn't matter - 2

Principals - 18

- Possible solutions - local day care centres - 6
- counselling parents - 4
- threaten to cut off family allowances - 2
- rigorous application of 20-day policy - 2
- volunteer mother's helpers - 2

Parents - 10 parents stated they occasionally found it necessary to keep their children home from school, usually to care for pre-school children.

13. Do low income families tend to move frequently, causing their children to change schools and miss school time?

Teachers - 26

- Possible solutions - low cost public housing - 6
- do not allow school changes during the school year - 2

Principals - 23

- Possible solutions - low cost public housing - 7
- extended adult retraining - 2
- teach parents proper attitudes - 2 Methods not stated.

Parents - 8 parents felt that they moved frequently.

- Possible solution - low cost housing - 3

14. Are grade one students from economically disadvantaged families less ready than others to benefit from school experiences when they enter school?

Principals - 24

- Possible solutions - free kindergartens under school boards - 13
- assist parents in preparing preschoolers - 3
- more reading specialists - 2
- this is the parents' problem, not the school's - 2

Teachers - 22

- Possible solution - free kindergartens under school boards - 18

Parents - 6

- Possible solutions - free kindergartens under school boards - 3
- assist parents in preparing preschoolers - 1

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